



# VJCCCA Guidance Document

## Re: HB 1771 - Prevention Services Category

June 5, 2019

This guidance document is intended for Local VJCCCA Coordinators and Plan Contacts to provide preliminary guidance on the addition of Prevention Services as an Allowable VJCCCA Program and Service based on House Bill 1771 which amends the statute governing the Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act (VJCCCA).

### **Background and Guidance for FY 2020:**

- During the 2019 General Assembly a bill was passed to modify the VJCCCA statute (HB 1771).
- HB 1771 amended the Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act (VJCCCA) effective July 1, 2019 to allow for the provision of community diversion and community-based resources for juveniles who are not involved in the juvenile justice system but who have been screened for needing community diversion or community-based services using an evidence-based assessment protocol. View full text here: <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?191+ful+CHAP0105>
- Prevention Services Category: The bill allows localities and commissions to elect to add the category of prevention services to their plans, but localities are not required to add the new category.

### **New Program Category - Prevention Services:**

Prevention Services: Efforts that support youth who are "at-risk" of becoming involved in delinquent behavior and help prevent a youth from entering the juvenile justice system as a delinquent. Prevention also includes efforts to prevent youth from penetrating farther into the juvenile justice system after a juvenile has committed a delinquent act; these prevention efforts may include arbitration, diversionary or mediation programs, pro-social activities, and community service work or other treatment.

### **Amending Your VJCCCA Plan**

Most localities are operating under biennial plans approved by the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Board of Juvenile Justice through June 30, 2020. Though current plans are approved through June 30, 2020, localities have the option to request to make adjustments to their plans to add Prevention Services or other categories at any time. This guidance document will provide preliminary guidance for the inclusion of the new category. As we move forward with this initiative, DJJ will develop implementation strategies and will convene a work group with geographical and partner agency representation. Implementation will include the adoption of a screening or assessment tool, referral process, data collection methods and program management strategies.

No new funding was included with the legislation. Localities interested in adding the new Prevention Services category to their local VJCCCA plans, will need to amend their current plans and reallocate funding from other program and service categories. Localities interested in adding the Prevention Services category for FY 2020 need to amend their plans by September 1, 2019. Please indicate your intent to add the service category through communication with your Regional VJCCCA Coordinator by **July 1, 2019**.

The following steps are necessary to add the Prevention Services category to a VJCCCA Plan:

- 1) Development and submission of an updated Excel workbook, adding the Prevention Services Category and reallocating funding from existing programs and services. (Note: You may also submit a request to add the Prevention Services category with a budget of \$0.00 (zero dollars) while building your program and budget.)
- 2) Updated letters of support from required plan participants indicating their participation in plan development and their support for the changes to the plan, including the addition of the Prevention Services category
- 3) A one-page concept paper (see attached template).
- 4) Submission of a Plan for Tracking Non-DJJ Cases. The locality will need to develop a mechanism for tracking cases outside of DJJ's BADGE Community Placement Reporting (CPR) module. DJJ's system for tracking programmatic units and fiscal data is for tracking cases that have been assigned a juvenile number and processed through DJJ intake or the courts. Non-DJJ youth cannot be entered into DJJ's database.



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- 5) Assessment Tool: The law requires the use of an evidence-based assessment tool. For FY2020, the locality will need to identify and propose an interim assessment tool and a program coordinator to administer the tool.
- 6) After submission of these documents, the DJJ will review, provide any technical assistance needed and make a determination with regards to the approval of the proposed service.

### **Development and Selection of Prevention Programs**

Prevention programs adopted should be evidence-based or evidence-informed. Programs focused on helping youth develop positive life skills, reduce risk factors, build protective factors, increase pro-social engagement, and gain opportunities for community involvement have proven to be the most effective. Prevention programs should be implemented locally even though they are funded by state or federal funds. With local support and action, prevention programs will have the greatest chance for success. Local collaboration is needed to target multiple risk and protective factors.

Most research identifies three major classes of effective prevention programs for children and youth:

- Primary Prevention Programs aims to prevent problem behaviors before they occur (pre-school programs that occur before children exhibit problems).
- Secondary Prevention Programs focus on reducing the impact of problem behaviors (early signs of delinquency, misbehavior, and conduct problems evident).
- Juvenile Offender Programs target interventions to divert youth from the justice system (interventions at contact with juvenile justice system).

The DJJ recommends the implementation of Secondary Prevention Programs. Secondary Prevention Programs include activities designed to enhance the skills, competencies and thinking of youth, as well as those that offer specific violence and crime prevention programming. These programs include education programs, afterschool activities, conflict resolution training, skill building, service learning, violence prevention training, employment opportunities, mentoring, pro-social engagement, and tutoring and remedial education programs.

Core principles for effective secondary prevention programs include:

- Delivered with a high dosage and intensity - greater amounts of contact time with participants
- Comprehensive – multi-component programs that address risk and protective factors
- Appropriately timed – specific times of need and participants most receptive to change
- Developmentally appropriate – age and developmentally appropriate for the target audience
- Well trained staff – efficacy, level of training, education, and experience
- Strong administrative support
- Regular assessment or evaluation

### **Model Programs**

Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development (Blueprints) identifies, recommends, and disseminates programs for youth that, based on scientific evaluations, have strong evidence of effectiveness. Blueprints serves as a resource for government agencies, schools, foundations, and community organizations trying to make informed decisions about their investments in youth programs. Blueprints began with a focus on youth programs to prevent violence, delinquency, and drug use, but has expanded its scope. Blueprints now also recommends programs to improve mental and physical health, self-regulation, and educational outcomes. The outcomes of interest involve more than preventing harmful behavior; they also involve positive behaviors and healthy development. Both promising and model programs meet basic Blueprints standards, but model programs meet additional experimental requirements. Link for researching model programs: <https://blueprintsprograms.org/program-search/>